

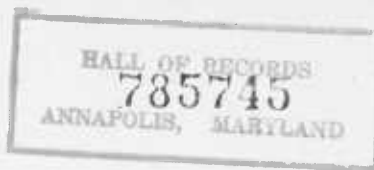
Twenty-fourth Annual Report

Maryland State Board
« OF »
Motion Picture Censors



1939-1940

OFFICES
211 NORTH CALVERT STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



Twenty-fourth Annual Report

MARYLAND STATE BOARD
OF
MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

1939-1940



GEORGE R. MITCHELL
CHAIRMAN

ANNIE E. ELLIOTT
VICE-CHAIRMAN AND TREASURER

MARIE WHITE PRESSTMAN
SECRETARY

HELEN L. ODOM
CHIEF CLERK



OFFICES
211 NORTH CALVERT STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

HON. HERBERT R. O'CONOR,

Governor of Maryland,

State House, Annapolis, Maryland.

SIR: We have the honor to present to you the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors, pursuant to the provisions of Article 9, Section 1, of the Act of 1922.

The Motion Picture Board of the State makes the following report of its work for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1939, and ending September 30, 1940.

General Statement

During the fiscal year two thousand two hundred fifty-five (2,255) motion picture films were reviewed, comprising six hundred forty (640) feature films (five of which were rejected "in toto") the balance being newsreels, shorts, cartoons, etc. One rejected film, "MAD YOUTH," was later approved with eliminations after a reconstructed print was resubmitted to the Board in June. Two hundred seventy-nine (279) eliminations were made on statutory grounds. There was a total of one hundred nineteen (119) foreign subjects reviewed by the Board numerically listed as follows:

22 British
11 French
62 German

22 Polish
1 Polish-Yiddish
1 Czechoslovakian

In the censorship of foreign language films, the Foreign Language Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Board, has been of invaluable assistance. The Foreign Language Committee is composed of twenty persons who are outstanding in the State of Maryland for their knowledge of the language and customs of foreign countries, and are able to give a high grade of intelligent advice in the Board's work of censoring foreign language films.

Work of the Board

Two hundred seventy-nine (279) eliminations of scenes, subtitles or dialogue, were made in the pictures reviewed. The eliminations ordered by the Board were made on statutory grounds. The foregoing statement of the past year, showing the number of eliminations and the number of rejected pictures, by no means adequately covers this phase of our work. During the course of the year many conferences were held with applicants for licensing and, wherever possible, constructive suggestions were made for the revision of pictures in order to avoid conflict with the Maryland Statute. This work is important to the producing companies, to the exhibitors and to the public, and cannot be fairly measured by any statistical record. The result is that each year fewer eliminations are noted in the record. Frequently the Board's suggestions have resulted in the revision of the picture by the applicant or the producing companies. Nor are the number of deletions shown in this fiscal year's record a true measure of the protection which the public receives from the Board, for, unquestionably, the producing companies (both the Hays' organization and the Independents) have become so familiar with the State Motion Picture laws and regulations and with our procedure in administering the same, that many scenes and dialogues, which are known to be offensive, under our statute, are eliminated before submission for review.

The Board now requires that all dialogue must be submitted at the time the application for license is made to the Board. This rule rigidly enforced has been found most advantageous, especially in its relationship to foreign films.

All of the review work is carried on daily at the Board's offices, 211 North Calvert Street, in Baltimore. The two projectionists employed by the Board are constantly on duty and, as a rule, each film that is presented is reviewed by two members of the Board. Pictures containing controversial matters are rescreened several times before all members of the Board, and after careful study action is taken, either licensing the picture as presented, or directing that eliminations be made, or rejecting the picture "in toto." The applicant then receives notice of the action of the Board and where eliminations are made or a rejection is ordered, statutory reasons for such action are given in writing. In the event the applicant is dissatisfied he (or his representative) may,

through appeal, request the entire Board to again sit in review on the picture. After such review and after hearing the arguments of the applicant or his representative and giving due consideration, the Board announces its final decision. Should the decision be unfavorable to the applicant, he still has his remedy in the courts.

Seven thousand nine hundred thirteen (7,913) original reels were reviewed by the Maryland Board during the past year, with a footage of 6,446,990 feet, which, if joined together would measure more than 1,121 miles of film actually passing through our projection machines in the process of screening these films. In connection with such review work, the dialogue must be read carefully, consultations had and decisions made. A file is kept on each picture, including the application, dialogue and action taken, as well as a record of the licenses issued, together with the correspondence.

Receipts and Disbursements

The total receipts of the Board during the past fiscal year were \$53,180.00 as compared with \$50,180.00 for the preceding year, an increase of \$3,000.00. The expenditures of the Board were \$29,598.72. The net revenue to the State, after deducting the cost of operation, was \$23,581.28. Original films and reissues are charged for at the rate of \$2.00 per thousand feet or less, duplicate films at \$1.00 per thousand feet or less. All approvals of duplicates must be applied for by the same person within the year after the examination and approval of the original. A charge of \$1.00 is made for restoring a seal of approval on a censored film.

Attention is respectfully called to the financial statement appended to this report which shows the financial growth of this State department and the increasing amount reverting to the State Treasury each year since 1920. In this period a total net revenue of \$205,314.50 reverted to the State Treasury.

Recommendations

The new year marks the advent to the Board of an Official Reviewer. This position is looked upon by all State Censor Boards as one of major importance, and it is the opinion of the Board that the Maryland Reviewer does not receive a salary commensurate with the responsibilities and duties this position entails.

It is anticipated that in the early part of 1941 motion picture music boxes will be introduced into the State of Maryland. These boxes will screen a 16 mm. film by deposit of a coin therein. Inasmuch as this will be an innovation in the entertainment circles, it is quite difficult at this time to forecast even an estimate of the probabilities. However, predicated on actual tests in New York City and Chicago, it is believed that the usage of sound boxes will, within a period of a year, result in a considerable increase in motion picture censorship fees to the State of Maryland and a necessary increase in operating expenses for the Board to properly censor and supervise this additional class of motion picture films. Therefore, the Board, having in mind its added responsibilities, will request in its budget for 1942-43 that provision be made to take care of the needed equipment, necessary personnel increase covering office and inspection work, to adequately handle this additional screen entertainment.

In view of the inadequate facilities of the present headquarters of the Board, and the criticism that has been expressed relative to the fire hazard involved, the Board recommends that this condition be immediately rectified by removal to other premises in the interest of safety, which will not only take care of this situation but will provide sufficient floor space for the increasing work of the Board.

Among the chief concerns of censors are crime films which must be dealt with in their various phases. Crime serials, so largely patronized by youth, run for periods of from twelve to fifteen weeks in "neighborhood" houses, and thereby focus the attention of immature minds on exploits of crime and daring. It is a question whether cycles of such films have not a detrimental and lasting effect upon the social attitudes of children. Many admirable educational films of the same length are now available in theatres frequented by youth for children's programs on Fridays and Saturdays. It is suggested by this Board that organizations interested in better motion pictures for children advocate the use of better material for such programs. Appeals have been made to this Board to deal with the excessive amounts of drinking shown in films. The chief complaint is that such scenes are generally shown in a favorable light and that the evils of drinking are rarely depicted on the screen. Again, the Board has been appealed to by those agencies interested in public safety who ask that

the Board take steps to reduce scenes showing careless handling of automobiles and traffic violations. It is again noted that such incidents are treated lightly and rarely condemned. The Board believes that the grounds of complaint in both cases are not without foundation. A summary of the analysis charts which the Board makes on each feature picture shows that all of these factors in pictures that are screened are carefully checked, special attention being given to excess drinking, exploitation of crime, and cruelty to animals.

Inspection Staff

This department consists of four persons who are required to visit the motion picture theatres throughout the State for the purpose of checking the requirements of the Motion Picture Law. There are over two hundred theatres in the State of Maryland. Our Inspection Department checks daily all irregularities or violations of the law and, as a result of their splendid work and constant vigilance, serious violations have been reduced. One of the outstanding violations of the year was that of an open air theatre located on the Eastern Shore displaying films that had not been submitted to the Board for approval.

Industry Cooperation

The Board wishes to take this occasion to express its appreciation for the wholehearted cooperation it has received from the theatre owners, managers, and their projectionists within the State of Maryland, and also from the New York and Washington representatives of the Film Industry.

Change in Personnel

During the year 1939-40 there was a change in the personnel of the Board. The resignation of Mr. Holmes M. Alexander as Vice-Chairman brought to the Board Mrs. Annie E. Elliott in that position.

Following is a statistical summary of the operations of the Censor Board.

Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE R. MITCHELL, *Chairman*
ANNIE E. ELLIOTT, *Vice-Chairman*
MARIE W. PRESSTMAN, *Secretary*

December 31, 1940.

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 1, 1939—September 30, 1940

Month and Year	Original Reels	Duplicate Reels	Substitute Seals	Receipts	Total
1939					
October	936	3,507	104	\$4,537.00 104.00	\$4,641.00
November	602	2,983	103	3,882.00 103.00	3,985.00
December	719	3,492	116	4,670.00 116.00	4,786.00
1940					
January	636	3,310	114	4,299.00 114.00	4,413.00
February	595	3,657	145	4,450.00 145.00	4,595.00
March	668	3,218	210	4,258.00 210.00	4,468.00
April	570	3,356	146	4,152.00 146.00	4,298.00
May	602	3,571	99	4,517.00 99.00	4,616.00
June	579	3,087	91	4,027.00 91.00	4,118.00
July	734	3,280	88	4,411.00 88.00	4,499.00
August	738	3,368	106	4,471.00 106.00	4,577.00
September	534	3,333	88	4,096.00 88.00	4,184.00
	7,913	40,162	1,410		\$53,180.00

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the Year Ended September 30, 1940

FEES:

Original Reels (6,446,990 feet).....	\$14,474.00	
(Including 94 trailers, 23,764 feet, \$188.00, and 5-16 MM films, 6,993 feet, \$20.00).		
Duplicate Reels (33,851,839 feet).....	37,296.00	
Sale of Substitute Seals (1,410).....	1,410.00	
		\$53,180.00
Deposited to credit of State Treasury.....		<u>\$53,180.00</u>

EXPENSES

SALARIES:

Board Members.....	\$7,200.00	
Other Employees.....	16,403.30	
		\$23,603.30

OTHER EXPENSES:

Office Supplies and Stationery.....	389.50	
Printing.....	273.90	
Film Approval Seals.....	1,249.96	
Motion Picture Machine Supplies.....	133.05	
Repairs and Replacements.....	130.05	
Light, Heat, Power and Water.....	269.36	
Traveling.....	494.36	
Communication.....	514.74	
Insurance.....	60.00	
Office Equipment.....	50.50	
Motion Picture Equipment.....	0.00	
Rent.....	2,280.00	
Repairs and Improvements to Structure.....	150.00	
		5,995.42
		<u>\$29,598.72</u>

BUDGET ACCOUNT (PER COMPTROLLER)

Appropriation (1940).....	\$30,368.00	
Refund (Communication, Item 19).....	15.60	
		\$30,383.60
Less Reversion to State Treasury.....	784.88	
		\$29,598.72
General Fund Disbursements.....		<u>\$29,598.72</u>

CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS
October 1, 1939—September 30, 1940

	Dramas, Original and Duplicate	Comedies, Original and Duplicate	News, Original and Duplicate	Cartoons, Original and Duplicate	Advertising Original and Duplicate	Mis- cellaneous, Original and Duplicate
October.....	362	243	503	46	18	15
November....	308	184	575	48	16	18
December....	376	229	578	62	17	28
January.....	351	243	506	60	11	12
February....	340	257	567	52	17	4
March.....	324	247	568	71	25	5
April.....	326	263	508	71	13	4
May.....	341	279	576	95	12	7
June.....	302	267	582	89	9	3
July.....	351	207	518	56	9	3
August.....	352	227	644	86	10	2
September...	326	199	512	78	12	4
	4,059	2,845	6,637	814	169	105

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Films, Original.....	2,255			
Films, Duplicate.....	12,374			
Reels, Original.....		7,913		
Reels, Duplicate.....		40,162		
Number of Feet, Original.....			6,446,990	
Number of Feet, Duplicate.....			33,851,839	
Films Approved without Eliminations				14,269
Films Rejected.....				5
Films Approved with Eliminations...				355
	14,629	48,075	40,298,829	14,629

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
TABLE SHOWING TOTAL ANNUAL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSE-
MENTS, TOGETHER WITH THE AMOUNTS REVERTING
TO THE STATE TREASURY

October 1, 1920—September 30, 1940

	Receipts	Disbursements	Amount Reverting to State Treasury
10-1-20 to 9-30-21...	\$26,488.33	\$19,025.26	\$7,468.07
10-1-21 to 9-30-22...	26,866.90	19,842.12	7,024.78
10-1-22 to 9-30-23...	27,059.51	19,892.93	7,166.58
10-1-23 to 9-30-24...	26,338.50	20,730.44	5,608.06
10-1-24 to 9-30-25...	29,249.50	22,207.24	7,042.26
10-1-25 to 9-30-26...	30,207.92	22,662.82	7,545.10
10-1-26 to 9-30-27...	32,498.55	24,883.80	7,614.75
10-1-27 to 9-30-28...	38,165.57	27,734.69	10,430.88
10-1-28 to 9-30-29...	44,486.27	32,937.76	11,548.51
10-1-29 to 9-30-30...	38,954.98	31,718.26	7,236.72
10-1-30 to 9-30-31...	35,245.85	31,816.79	3,429.06
10-1-31 to 9-30-32...	35,637.44	32,158.81	3,478.63
10-1-32 to 9-30-33...	35,152.34	34,207.93	944.41
10-1-33 to 9-30-34...	36,563.00	27,174.49	9,388.51
10-1-34 to 9-30-35...	39,463.00	27,577.76	11,885.24
10-1-35 to 9-30-36...	44,073.00	28,927.98	15,145.02
10-1-36 to 9-30-37...	49,293.00	28,855.10	20,437.90
10-1-37 to 9-30-38...	48,659.00	30,197.34	18,461.66
10-1-38 to 9-30-39...	50,180.00	30,302.92	19,877.08
10-1-39 to 9-30-40...	53,180.00	29,598.72	23,581.28
	<u>\$747,762.66</u>	<u>\$542,453.16</u>	<u>\$205,314.50</u>